

REMARKS

Claims 1-15, 17-20, and 38-55 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-5 were previously withdrawn from consideration as drawn to a non-elected invention. In this response, no claims have been cancelled or amended. Accordingly, claims 6-15, 17-20, and 38-55 are currently under consideration. Amendment and cancellation of certain claims is not to be construed as a dedication to the public of any of the subject matter of the claims as previously presented.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR § 1.83(a) for allegedly failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Specifically, the Office Action states that the shield must be shown or the feature cancelled from the claims.

Applicants submit that the protective shield is shown as protective sheet element (61) in Figs. 18-19 or protective sheet element (63) in Figs. 20-21. According to paragraph [0014] of the specification, the sealing membrane may be protected against inadvertent tearing or puncture using a protective shield that is deployable over it. A more detailed description of this deployable feature is provided in paragraph [0052] of the specification. Here it states that the sealing membrane (60) may be protected by a protective sheet (61) that is folded accordion-style in the non-deployed position (Figs. 18A-19A), and then unfolded to cover the sealing membrane in the deployed position (Figs. 18B-19B). In another variation, as shown in Figs. 20-21, the protective sheet (63) is rolled-up in the non-deployed configuration, and then unrolled to cover the sealing membrane (60) in its deployed configuration. In view of the foregoing description, it is apparent that the protective shield is protective sheet elements (61) and (63) because the protective sheet protects the sealing membrane by being deployed over it (see MPEP 608.01(o)).

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 6-15, 17-20, 38, 39 and 53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Office Action states that the specification does not disclose or clearly describe how the protective shield is connected or how the protective shield is able to be disposed over at least a portion of the expandable region.

Applicants submit that paragraph [0052] of the specification clearly describes the attachments of the protective shield (protective sheet) to other components of the device as well as the mechanism of deployment over the expandable region.

At least in view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 6-15, 17-20, and 38-55 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Buelna et al. (U.S. 6,620,177). Specifically, the Office Action states that the cited reference teaches all claimed device features, including a protective shield (col. 6, lines 14-17). Applicants disagree, and respectfully point out that the disclosure in col. 6, lines 14-17 of Buelna et al. describes the sealing membrane, not the shield that protects it.

Thus, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) of claims 6-15, 17-20, and 38-55 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 506512002100. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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